PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

CALCUTTA TOWN HALL MEETING

REGARDING

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

PUBLIC MEETING

OF THE

HINDU COMMUNITY

HELD ON WEDNESDAY, THE 5th SEPT. 1894,

AT THE

TOWN HALL OF CALCUTTA,

TO THANK SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

AND THE

AMERICAN PEOPLE.

2,000 COPIES PUBLISHED

UNDER THE PATRONAGE OF

RAI JOTINDRA NATH CHOWDHURY, M.A., B.L.,

ZEMINDAR, TAKI.

1894.

PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

PUBLIC MEETING

AT THE

TOWN HALL OF CALCUTTA.

A Public Meeting of the Hindu Community called at the instance of its representative members such as—Pundit Rajkumar Nyayaratna, Babu Issan Chandra Mookerjee, Maharaj-Kumar Benoy Krishna Bahadur, Babu Guru Prosonna Ghose * and Rai Nunda Lall Bose—was held on Wednesday, the 5th of September, 1894, at theTown Hall of Calcutta.

The objects of the meeting were, to consider how best to express their gratitude to Swami Vivekananda, for his able representation of Hinduism at the Parliament of Religions at Chicago; and to thank the American people for the cordial and sympathetic reception they had accorded to the Swami.

It is not too much to say that the inhabitants of Calcutta had never before in the history of British India met together in the Town Hall or elsewhere with an object more noble, more peaceful and more elevating. It was not to consider the pressing problems of politics, or to discuss delicate questions of controversial ethics, but to turn their attention once for all with a serene attitude of mind to the cardinal principles of Hinduism which teaches that the Author of the Universe is the only reality, that all human pursuits are Vanities and all worldly things unreal. It was truly remarkable that towards the close of the 19th century, when civilization is another

* The organizers of the meeting are happy to make their grateful acknowledgments of the material help they received from this gentleman.

name for material progress, the place assigned to the soul should be once more recognised by the sons of New India.

The meeting was thoroughly representative in its character. Every section of the Hindu Community of Calcutta and its suburbs, including a number of Marwarees, Beharees and Marhatties, was represented. The meeting was announced to commence at 5-30 P. M. but it was scarcely 5 P. M. when the spacious hall was filled to its utmost capacity. The speakers as they entered the hall, were most enthusiastically cheered.

The most interesting feature of the meeting was that a large number of influential orthodox Pundits, and leading members of the Hindu Community were present to show their sympathy with the object of the meeting. Some Hindu Brahmacharis and Sannyasis were also found in the midst of this august gathering. It was estimated that nearly four thousand people were assembled on the occasion.

Among those present we noticed—

Pundit Madhusudan Smritiratna.
" Kamakhya Nath Tarkabagis.
" Uma Charan Tarkaratna.
" Chandi Charan Smrititirtha.
" Rama Nath Tarkasidhanta.
" Kader Nath Bidyaratna.
" Mohesh Chundra Chooramani.
" Nondo Coomar Nyayaratna.
" Kailas Nath Bidyaratna.
" Tarapada Bidyasagar.
" Baneemadhub Tarkalankar.
" Judu Nath Sarbabhouma.
" Ambica Churan Nyayaratna.
" Baikantha Nath Vidyaratna.
" Shib Narain Siromoni.
Rajah Peary Mohun Mookerjee, C. S. I.
Hon'ble Justice Gurudass Banerjee, DL.

Hon'ble Gonesh Chunder Chundra.
„ Surendra Nath Banerjee.
Kumar Dinendra Nath Roy.
„ Radha Prasad Roy.
Rai Jotindra Nath Chowdhury, M. A., B. L.,
Zemindar (Taki).
„ Rakhal Chandra Chowdhury.
Zemindar (Barrisal).
Babu Guru Prosonna Ghose, Zemindar.
„ Nanda Lall Mukerjee, „
„ Jogendra Chandra Ghosh, „
„ Khetter Nath Mullick, „
Rai Sheo Bux Bogla Bahadur.
J. Ghosal Esqr.,
N. N. Ghosh, Esqr. Barrister-at-law,
Editor, Indian Nation.
Mr. Monmotho Mullick, Barrister-at-law.
„ J. N. Banerjee, „
Babu Norendra Nath Sen, Attorney-at-law,
Editor, Indian Mirror.
Babu Bhupendra Nath Bose, M. A., B. L.,
Attorney-at-law.
„ Kally Nath Mitter, „
„ Hirendra Nath Dutta, Prem Chand Roy Chand Student, Attorney-at-law.
„ Upendra Nath Mozoomdar, Prem Chand Roy Chand Student.
„ Pramatha Nath Kar, M. A., Attorney-at-law.
„ Golap Chandra Sastri, M. A., B. L.,
Vakil High Court.
„ Sirish Chandra Chowdhury, M. A., B. L.,
Vakil High Court.
„ Issur Chandra Chackerbutty,
Vakil High Court.

Babu Kally Prasanna Roy, M. A., B. L.,
Pleader (Lahore).
„ Saligram Sing, B. L., Vakil High Court.
„ Amarendra Nath Chatterjee, B. L., „
„ Atul Krishna Ghose, B. L., Vakil High Court.
„ Manindra Nath Bhattacharjee, M. A., B. L.,
Vakil High Court.
„ Nogendra Nath Mitter, M. A., B. L.,
Vakil High Court.
„ Hemendra Nath Mitter, M. A., B. L.
„ Bepin Behary Ghose, M. B.
„ Bhupendra Kumar Bose, M. A.
„ Jotindra Lall Mitter, B A., B. L.
„ Norendra Nath Mitter, B. A., B. L.
„ Amrita Krishna Mullick, B. A., B. L.
Prof. M. N. Gupta.
Babu Lalit Mohun Banerjee, B. A., Head-Master.
J. Padshah Esqr.
„ Khetter Pal Chackerbutty.
Right Rev. N. Sadhananda (Ceylon).
Dr. J. B. Daly, *Editor, Indian Daily News.*
Babu Amrita Lal Roy, *Editor, Hope.*
„ Soshi Bhusan Mookerjee, *Editor, National Guardian,*
and others.

Some gentlemen of light and leading, including among them Rajah Rajendra Narayan Deb Bahadur son of late Rajah Sir Radhakanta Deb Bahadur K. C. S. I., Sir Romesh Chandra Mittra Kt. late Judge of the High Court of Calcutta, Babu Issan Chandra Mookerjee, Babu Romanath Ghose, Zemindar, Rai Bahadur Gagan Chandra Roy (Ghazipur), Babu Srish Chandra Bose (Munsiff, Ghazipur), who were unavoidably prevented from attending the meeting, wrote letters sympathising with its object.

On the motion of Hon'ble Gonesh Chandra Chandra, seconded by Babu Guru Prosonno Ghose, Rajah Peary Mohun Mookerjee, C. S. I. was voted to the chair.

Rajah Peary Mohun Mookerjee, on taking the chair, said:—Hon'ble Justice Guru Das Banerjee and Gentlemen—I thank you heartily for having asked me to take the chair of this meeting. We are assembled here this evening to express our thankfulness not to one who has distinguished himself by his meritorious services to the state, or to one who has won the reputation or triumphs of statesmanship, but we assemble in this grand meeting to express our high sense of appreciation and deep gratitude to a simple Sannyasi, only thirty years old, who has been expounding the truths of our religion to the great American people with an ability, tact and judgment, (Cheers) which have elicited the highest admiration. Brother Vivekananda has opened the eyes of an important section of the civilized world by explaining the great truths of the Hindu religion, and convinced them that the most valuable products of human thought in the region of philosophy and religion, are to be found not in Western science and literature, but in our ancient Shastras. (Cheers) I am very glad to find so large and influential a gathering to do honour to such a distinguished benefactor of our country. But in doing honour to Brother Vivekananda, we should not lose sight of the fact that he is a product of the system of education which has been fostered by the British Government with profuse liberality. And speaking for myself, I cannot help taking this opportunity to say that I feel more deeply grateful to the British Government for having inaugurated the study of Sanskrit language and literature than for the telegraph and railway, the telephone and microphone which they have given to us. It is not, I think, too much to say that the study of Sanskrit literature has supplied in the hands of our young men a key to those treasures, which any nation might

justly be proud of, and that it has given our young men a means of finding contentment and happiness in situations which would have otherwise filled them with misery and despair. We owe much to Brother Vivekananda, and hope that the speakers, who have kindly offered to take part in this meeting, will do justice to the claims which Brother Vivekananda certainly has on the gratitude of India. With these words, I request my friend, Babu Norendra Nath Sen, to move the first Resolution.

RESOLUTION—I.

Babu Norendra Nath Sen, in moving the first Resolution, said:—

Gentlemen—The present meeting is one which is unique of its kind in this city, as we have met here to honour not a high state functionary, as we usually do, but a Hindu ascetic, who, by crossing the ocean, has done so much to further the cause of Hinduism by his eloquence and learning. And not only this; but he, whose services we have come here to acknowledge, is only a youth scarcely, as I understand, thirty-two years of age. He must be a wonderful man who, at such an age, could command so overpowering a personality as to dazzle and electrify the most forward people of the day. It is said that facts are stranger than fiction. To my mind, some of the events that are occurring at the present moment far exceed in strangeness the stories, supplied by the most vivid imagination of the novelist; and I am very much inclined to ask in astonishment—"Are we living in a dream-land?" For, how else can we account for the phenomenal success of Swami Vivekanand's visit to the Parliament of Religions at Chicago, and of his subsequent work in the United States? Such success has given almost a new lease of life to the Hindus as a nation. It has been a brilliant gleam of light in

the dark pages of the contemporary history of the Hindus, and has buoyed them up with hope, such as they never experienced before. Circumstances had, for sometime, gone so badly with us that we were driven almost to despair until the triumph, which has been attending the cause of Hinduism in America, through the efforts of a gifted Hindu, relumed our darkened spirits, and fed them with expectant longings. Once a great nation, it has been our misfortune to be fallen so low as now; and to be misjudged and misused, and maligned and harassed and badgered at every turn; our faults magnified; and our very virtues accounted for as dangerous criminalities! But what then? Are we new to suffering, or is suffering new to us? And then, remember that there is that mighty law in nature, the law of compensation; and much sorrow reaps more reward, and in gaining what we have deserved, who shall deny us our meed, who come between us and our gods whom we serve, love and obey? Swami Vivekanand is only an instrument in the hands of the gods. You all know well enough that when any thing has to be done, and the time is opportune, the right man is invariably found. It is not every day that we meet with such a man as Swami Vivekanada. He has been born to play an important part in the history of this country. His natural gifts are extraordinary. His large lustrous eyes, like orbs of fire, shoot forth rays of life and light, and knowledge and power And if he has been such a successful expounder of the faith of his fathers, it is because he has made the Hindu philosophy his special study; he has made the *Bhagabat Gita* his constant companion, for I am told, he is always found carrying the Gita in his pocket. It is impossible to over-estimate the importance of Swami Vivekanand's services to this country; and we should not have deserved to be called Hindus, if we had failed to gather here this evening to testify our respect and gratitude to him. Though Calcutta has been behindhand the towns of

Madras,Bangalore and Kombakonum in holding this meeting, yet to the credit of our city it must be said that it was here that the idea of voting an address of thanks both to the Swami and the American people originated ; and, perhaps, after all, it was well that the first meeting should have been held in the capital of Southern India, for it was the Madrassis who helped Swami Vivekananda, a native of Bengal, with money to enable him to carry out his mission. The whole circumstances connected with Swami Vivekananda's departure from this country, and the universal joy and thankfulness with which the success of his work in America was received by his countrymen, shew the advancing spirit of the Hindus of the present day. As I have said, it was the Madrassis who put him in funds to enable him to proceed to Chicago; and the Hindus throughout India feel with one mind the happiness derived from the glorious result of Swami Vivekanand's labours in America. And the Hindus forget all sectional differences, and unite in honouring the great Hindu messenger to the West. The spectacle in itself is a most interesting one. It is evident national life is springing up everywhere; and no body can say now that the Hindus are a dead or inert nation, for certainly a nation which can produce a Vivekananda, who imparts a new turn of thought to a people in the forefront of modern civilization, must yet have much vigorous life before it. Only the other day, an English gentleman at this very Hall, told us how Hindu religious ideas were travelling fast in the West, even before Swami Vivekanand's visit to the Chicago Parliament of Religions; but a man, like Vivekananda, was wanting to give a powerful impetus to the dissemination of such ideas. The Swami's visit, therefore, to America, was a most seasonable one. We are living in stirring times, and are unable, perhaps, to realize fully what is passing around us. To me it seems that the union between the East and the West, however Utopian the idea may look to many, is now only a

question of time. Much stranger things than those we have already experienced, are not unlikely yet to happen. We have only to follow Swami Vivekanand's example, and our country is sure to progress and prosper as it never progressed and prospered before. Work, work, work should be the motto of every Hindu who has got the true interest of his country at heart, that is, work as unselfish, devoted and earnest as that of the truly patriotic Swami. Work is always sure to bring on its own reward. With these words, I will move the first Resolution which runs as follows:—"*That this meeting desires to record its grateful appreciation of the great services rendered to the cause of Hinduism by Swami Vivekananda at the Parliament of Religions at Chicago, and of his subsequent work in America.*"

The Resolution was seconded by Rai Sew Bux Bogla, Bahadur, and supported by Kumar Radha Prosad Roy.

It was further supported by Rai Jotindra Nath Chowdhury, who said:—

Gentlemen—After the very able speech delivered by my learned friend and predecessor Babu Narendra Nath Sen, it is scarcely necessary for me to speak anything on the subject of the resolution to commend it to your acceptance; moreover I am inclined to think that it would be insulting your intelligence were I to give in detail the reasons which may be urged for the acceptance of the resolution which is now submitted for your consideration.

It has been told in some quarter that Hinduism was not represented at the Parliament of Religions recently held at Chicago. I think, gentlemen, that a meeting of this kind will give the lie direct to the statement like the above. We have met here to thank Swami Vivekananda for his services in America in the cause of Hinduism. As for the Swami himself, I am sure, that he is sufficiently loyal to his religion and to his God as not to require any thanksgiving on our

part for any services which he did in the past or may do in the future in the cause of his religion. Notwithstanding this we owe it to ourselves to mark our appreciation of the services rendered by the Swami to the cause of our religion by some such public demonstration as the present meeting. To appreciate his services, it is not at all necessary that we should agree with the Swami in all what he said in his speeches in America; nor is it at all necessary that we should admit that the Swami's representation of Hinduism is at all complete; for I personally would have preferred that he (Swami) had given to the *savants* of America a complete idea of Vaishnavism—that phase of Hinduism which is the least understood in European countries. However, we should be thankful to him for what he has done. His services can be looked at from two points of view. I mean his services to the Hindus and his services to humanity. His writings and speeches, I am sure, will dispel the many wrong impressions in the minds of the European *savants* and the scholars of other nationalities about our faith and philosophy. As regards his services to humanity I shall say this much only that it is my firm conviction--and I am glad to find that many eminent scholars in Europe are beginning to think in the same direction—that the true path of human salvation lies in Hinduism and Hinduism alone; so any one who tries to give a correct representation of the Hindu religion in these days of considerable misunderstandings and misrepresentations, is certainly entitled to our thanks for his services to the whole mankind. With these words, I have much pleasure in supporting this resolution.

The resolution was then put to the vote and carried unanimously.

RESOLUTION.—II.

Mr. N. N. Ghose, in proposing the second Resolution, said :—Rajah Peary Mohun Mookerjee and gentlemen—The Resolution which I have been asked to move is in the following terms : *"That this meeting tenders its best thanks to Dr. J. H. Barrows, the Chairman, and Mr. Merwin-Marie Snell, the President of the Scientific Section, of the Parliament of Religions at Chicago, and to the American people generally, for the cordial and sympathetic reception they have accorded to Swami Vivekananda."* I think, you will agree with me, on a very slight reflection, that this Resolution which offers thanks to certain individual American gentlemen and to the American people generally, is not by any means of a merely formal or ceremonial character. Swami Vivekananda has distinguished himself by speeches which we can read, appreciate and admire. It seems only natural that he should be entitled to our gratitude. At the same time, the success of any worker, whether he is a speaker or a writer, a discoverer, a thinker or a man of action, depends as much on the appreciation he gets from the community to which his work is addressed, as on his own intrinsic merits. From the days of Socrates downwards, the instances have been numerous of great teachers whose teaching has not only not been appreciated by their contemporaries, but has been positively despised, resented and rebelled against, and has led to their persecution. Two factors, therefore, must always contribute to success, namely, first the intrinsic value of the work, and, second, the due appreciation of it by those to whom it is offered. No success could be more sudden or brilliant than Vivekananda's. Indeed, there is hardly anything more striking in the history of oratorical achievements. There was a Hindu monk, unknown to fame, addressing, in semi-Oriental costume, an assembly, the majority of whom could hardly pronounce his name, upon a subject removed, as far as possible,

from their thoughts, and securing at once their applause and esteem. The merits of the speaker and the performance must have been great and surprising. But let us not forget that credit is at least equally due to those who appreciated him, encouraged him, found opportunities for his speaking, and gave him a patient and kind hearing. Vivekananda had gone to expound the principles of Hinduism, and if a people, professing a different religion, had received him with coldness, raised difficulties, technical or other, in the way of his speaking, and generally shown him disfavour, their conduct might have been excused as being under the circumstances only natural. But very different was the treatment they actually gave him. I am informed that the delegates had, as a rule, been invited. Vivekananda had not been invited, and therefore it would have been a very easy thing to exclude him on technical grounds from speaking at the Parliament. But Dr. Barrows, by a special act of kindness, waived all technical objections, introduced him to the audience, and permitted him to speak. Vivekananda did not say altogether fine and smooth things about Christianity, but gave occasionally hard knocks. His audience, at any rate, the American section of it, nevertheless gave him an indulgent hearing, and were warm in their acknowledgment of its merits. It is in no conventional sense, therefore, and not as a mere formality, that our thanks are due to the President of the Parliament of Religions and to the American people, for the recognition they have given to our countryman and our representative. Vivekananda spoke with a lucidity, a grace and a logical power which astonished and charmed his audience ; but I am not sure, whom to admire the more, the speaker for his magnificent feat or the American people for their quick insight and ready appreciation. A triumph, more signal and more sudden, has scarcely been known in history. None of the great religious teachers of the world, Buddha, Jesus Christ,

Mahomet or Confucius made converts by the hundred by a first attempt. But this Hindu preacher, this orange monk, as he has been called, dispelled, by one effort, some of the illusions of ages from the minds of hundreds of people, and roused them to some sense of the truths of a religion, which they had either never heard of, or must have always despised. And this is an age, not particularly distinguished for religious spirit. Vivekananda has been, however, you must remember, no single-speech Hamilton. His speech at the Parliament of Religions brought him into notice, but his work did not end there. In poiltical slang, he has been often "heckled," and his answers to the questions of inquirers have been quick and effective. He has been invited to address many meetings and appears to have invariably justified expectations. Indeed, he seems to be a general favourite and he finds it difficult to meet all the engagements that are thrust on him. Consider, gentlemen, what kind of people it is that have thus received our gifted countryman. We know very little of America directly, she is so far removed from us. But we can know something of her, through Professor Bryce's monumental work on the American commonwealth. Professor Bryce is a historical scholar of established reputation, respected all over England, aud may be trusted as an authority. He informs us that in the United states, Christianity, though it is not a State-supported religion, is truly a national religion. The Americans conceive that the religious character of a Government consists in nothing but the religious belief of the individual citizens, and the conformity of their conduct to that belief. They deem the general acceptance of Christianity to be one of the main sources of their national prosperity. They deem themselves to be a special object of divine favour. The influence of Christianity on the people, both as regards numbers and the education of those influenced, is greater than it is in Western Europe. I rely also on Professor Bryce for

the assertion that, as regards veracity, temperance, the purity of domestic life, tenderness to children and to the weak, and general kindliness of behaviour, the native Americans stand rather higher than the English or the Germans. Well, now it is a people like that, a people steeped in Christian tradition, Christian in doctrine, and Christian in life, that has given to Vivekananda a cordial and sympathetic reception. Their appreciation of him was instantaneous, electric. We would do well not only to thank the Americans, but to profit by their example. Their treatment of Vivekananda teaches us a lesson as to the way in which we should have to treat him or other workers like him that may appear before us on future occasions. This meeting is said to have been called to do honour to Vivekananda, and to the American people. I am not in the secrets of those who have called it, but I think, I shall not be very far wrong, if I make a guess as to their motives. If I probed their hearts, I think, I should discover that this meeting was convened not merely to offer thanks to others, but also to wipe away our own shame and reproach. Vivekananda is a Bengali, he went to America as the representative of the Hindu religion, but we gave him no sort of recognition, and no sort of help. He was taken in hand by the people of the southern Presidency, men whose vernacular was different from his own. And now that, having gone to America, he has won his laurels, and can command respect wherever he goes, we come forward as worshippers of success, and honour ourselves under the pretence of honouring him. Well may he repudiate our admiration with scorn and contumely, as Dr. Johnson repudiated the Earl of Chesterfield's praise of his Dictionary. Here, indeed, we have to take a lesson from the Americans. We, as a people, be it said to our eternal discredit, have never exhibited a faculty for appreciating our own great men. It is not until a countryman of ours has gone to Oxford, London or New York, and won the

applause of men of another complexion that we discover, we had a very hero in our midst. Let us learn now from Vivekananda's reception in a distant land, and among a strange people, professing a different religion, not to be guilty of neglect of native worth in the future, as we have been in the past. Vivekananda's achievements in America, remarkable as they have been, I regard however, rather as promises than as performances. His real work will have to be done in India. The redemption of India, I feel persuaded, lies not through her politics, but through her religion. Politics are in this country a superficial garb, put off and put on at pleasure. They sit loosely on the people. Religion is vital and essential, and inherited with their blood. It reaches the inmost depths of their nature, touches the marrow of their bones. This meeting is only a small testimony to its reality in this town. It has been organised by men, unused to the arts of agitation. Most of the active workers have been *Sannyasis* who go about barefooted, in characteristic yellow costume. If they had known to employ the machinery, customarily used for getting up political demonstrations, the meeting, large as it is, might have been ten times larger. Political demonstrations, however, are merely an imitation of the practices of the West. Religion is of the soil. The strongest, if not the only, convictions of the people are religious. I do not see, why in a meeting like this, we should assume an apologetic attitude, as if our purposes bordered on the sinister. Ours is a liberal Government, whose policy has been one of religious toleration from the beginning, which, in matters like marriage, inheritance and succession, has left unfettered the operation of the national laws, and which has granted to us the rights of public meeting and discussion. Why, then, should we, on so innocent a subject as religion, speak with bated breath, as if we had met for some nefarious purpose? Why must we be moved with a tremulous fear, as if we were

bent on something dark and disloyal, and as if detectives dogged our steps, and scanned our actions. If people can come with a bold front to a political meeting for purposes of agitation, surely there is no reason why their steps must falter, when they are called upon to give a voice to the only real convictions they possess. Whoever knows the life of the people, and can distinguish appearance from reality, knows that questions, affecting religion and society, are nearest their heart, and any public demonstration must be misleading which does not bear out that truth. If an English woman like Mrs. Besant can openly profess Hinduism, and a European *savant* like Professor Max Muller can grow eloquent over the philosophy of the *Upanishads*, there is no reason why Hindus must shrink from avowing their faith in their own religion or expressing gratitude to one of its interpreters. It must be a matter of satisfaction and pride to all Hindus that gleams of a new light have made themselves visible, that their religion, after having remained under a cloud for centuries in the eyes of other nations was just beginning to emerge from its gloom. That the Americans, by no means a godless people, or a people lukewarm in their belief, or a people professing a faith akin to Hinduism, had been able quickly to seize some of its salient points, was a good augury. There is reason to hope that the light that has dawned will spread. It would be enough if other nations brought themselves to study and appreciate the principles of Hinduism. Christian people need not repudiate Christianity, but they may read it by a new light. Hinduism seeks no other conversion than propagation of its doctrines. It may suggest a new interpretation of old religions. It does not deny incarnation, for instance, but instead of accepting a single fact as *the* incarnation, it believes, in many incarnations, and is, therefore, large enough to enclose many systems in its folds. Its purposes, however, are not aggressive, and it would be content if it could only be seen as it was, and

not contemned as a degrading, slavish, ignorant superstition. It would be enough for the present, if the religion of the Hindu was recognised as containing truths no less sublime and spiritual than any that have been elsewhere embodied. Professor Max Muller has said that the Hindus had cultivated every art save that of killing. We have no desire to make up our deficiences in that line, but we may be pardoned if we cherish a hope that some day the doctrines of a neglected Eastern creed may win hearts by peaceful methods. An ancient Roman poet has said : "Conquered Greece conquered her conquerors." That is, the literature and philosophy, the arts and science of Greece extorted the admiration of the Romans and proved to them the instruments of a higher education. Let us hope that conquered India may conquer her conquerors, not, of course, by steel and gunpowder; those were weapons we had never cared for, and we have no need to make their acquaintance now, for we are under the protection of a mighty power, and we have no fears. But the world has yet to see the last of her civilisation. Let us hope that not only the race to whose care we are committed, but the entire human race may some day draw some of its spiritual inspiration from the ancient religion of this land, that the East and West may thus make their full contribution to the perfection of humanity; and that the last civilisation of the world, like her first, may be a civilization, not of struggle and warfare, but of peace, sympathy, charity and harmonious co-operation to a great end.

The Resolution was seconded by Babu Khetter Nath Mullick.

In supporting the Resolution, Babu Kally Nath Mitter said :—Before referring to the 2nd Resolution, I would like to make some preliminary remarks. It is rarely, if ever we meet in this celebrated hall for the noble purpose of thanking a foreign nation. We have hitherto met for the purpose of ven-

tilating our grievances against the Government of the country or for adopting measures for securing political advantages. It is a matter of great satisfaction to me, and I have no doubt, also to the promoters of this meeting that there is such a large gathering. We have amongst us not only the very *elite* of our society, but also gentlemen of position who take great interest in Hinduism. To my mind, it augurs well of our people that we have made a departure from the usual rule, and I hope and trust that this departure will not prove an isolated one, but will become frequent, as time goes on. Now I come to the Resolution. Its terms are such that neither any argument nor eloquence is needed to recommend it to your acceptance. I believe, it is universally admitted that gratitude is one of the pre-eminent qualities of the Hindus; that being so, is it necessary that I should persuade you to accept this Resolution? I believe, I speak the sentiment of one and all present in this hall that it is not necessary; it is quite evident that you are impatient to vote for it, but I have to ask you to bear with me a little, for I have to say something of the noble nation whom we have met to-day to thank.

Gentlemen, I need not remind you that in the memorable year 1776, American independence was declared, and after a noble and glorious fight, it was secured. Since then, 118 years have elapsed, certainly not a long period for the regeneration of an Empire, and yet with unequalled assiduity, enterprise and devotion to work, they have been able to come to the forefront, and occupy one of the first places in this nether world. From a feeble beginning of thirteen weakly colonies, with a scattered population of three millions people, struggling with war and debt, they have now attained to the colossal growth of nearly 40 great commonwealths, and 40 millions inhabitants, and, in respect to whatever relates to man's material and moral advancement, found themselves unexcelled by any Empire or Kingdom on the face of the wide earth.

The four new wonders of the world were discovered during this period. The Electric Light, the Telephone, the Phonograph and the Microphone; and the Americans may well claim them to be offsprings of their own land; what they are, you all know, they may with justice be called miracles of science. I think, it may safely be asserted that they are not behind any nation in the world, either in learning, or material prosperity or in martial power. Can you, for a moment, doubt that the country which gave birth to the illustrious and ever-memorable George Washington and John Adams, should come out of obscurity in the manner she has done? What wonder, then, that the noble principles of Hindu religion would recommend themselves to their intelligent mind? I have advisedly used the expression noble, for otherwise it would not have been possible for it to outlive the ravages of times, to survive the bitter persecutions by the Mahomedan rulers, and get over the charming eloquence of the Christian Missionaries. Is it too much to say that the sayings and teachings of Krishna shall outlive time, or that the Vedas, Upanishads and Gita will, in all time and ages, shine as the brightest jewels of Hindu religion.

The reasons why the lectures of Swami Vivekananda were heard and appreciated, have been given by Mr. Snell, President of the Scientific Section of the Parliament of Re-ligions, Chicago, and I cannot do better than quote from his ...e *Pioneer* what those are.

...tense is the astonished admiration which the per-...sence and bearing and language of Paramahansa ...anda have wrung from a public accustomed to think ...us—thanks to the fables and half-truths of the mis-...s—as ignorant and degraded "heathen," there is no ...hat the continued interest is largely due to a genuine ... for the spiritual truths which India through him has ...red to the American people.

...eers.,

America is starving for spiritual nourishment. In spite of its absorption in material things, in spite of the ignorance and provincialism of its upper classes and the savagery of its lower, there are many souls scattered everywhere throughout its great population who are thirsting for higher things. Europe has always been indebted to India for its spiritual inspirations. There is little, very little, of high thought and aspiration in Christendom which cannot be traced to one or another of the successive influxes of Hindu ideas: either to the Hinduised Hellenism of Pythagoras and Plato, to the Hinduised Mazdeism of the Gnostics, to the Hinduised Judaism of the Kabbalists, or to the Hinduised Mahomedanism of the Moorish philosophers: to say nothing of the Hinduised Occultism of the Theosophists, the Hinduised Socinianism of the new England transcendentalists, and the many other new streams of orientalising influence which are fertilising the soil of contemporary Christendom.

The most illuminated men and women, therefore, in Europe and America, have a natural drawing towards Hinduism, the chief historic source of their light and life, as soon as they are brought into close contact with it under circumstances at all favorable to its just appreciation. In the United States, particularly, there are several widespread and influential movements which are distinctly Hindu in their character and tendencies. Not only is all the scientific and liberal thought monistic in its trend, but the so-called "Christian Science" movement (most egregiously misnamed), is admittedly based upon the Vedanta philosophy.

America is well sprinkled with Advaitins, of all three schools, even though they would not always, in the absence of any direct knowledge of Hindu thought, know how to define their position.

Even the Christian mythology is not so very different from the Hindu, and the latter is gradually becoming familiar

o the American people, through the medium of translations, books and articles by scientists and dilettanti, and the writings and personal labors of Theosophists and some other liberal sects.

All the Hinduising forces hitherto at work have received a notable impulse from the labors of Swami Vivekananda. Never before has so authoritative a representative of genuine Hinduism—as opposed to the emasculated and Anglicised versions of it so common in these days—been accessible to American inquirers; and it is certain, beyond peradventure, that the American people at large will, when he is gone, look forward with eagerness to his return, or the advent of some of his *confreres* of the institute of Sankaracharya."

With these remarks I heartily support the Resolution.

Babu Kally Nath Mitter was followed by the Hon'ble Babu Surendra Nath Banerji who, having just come in, was requested by the Chairman to speak a few words in support of the Resolution.

In compliance with this request Hon'ble Surendra Nath Banerjee addressed the meeting in the following terms: –

Mr. President and gentlemen—When I entered this hall I had not the least idea that I should take part in the proceedings of this meeting. I may say that, so far as this matter is concerned, I had imposed upon myself a vow of silence; but in as much as I should be wanting in my duty, if I left this meeting in listlessness, I must bow to the decision of our President and the great august gathering of my countrymen, who have called upon me to speak. It has been invariably the rule of my life not to allow personal considerations to interfere with the fulfilment of a mandate which may be laid upon me by the people. You have laid this mandate now on me and I gratefully submit, be the consequences what they may. Gentlemen, I am afraid that orthodox Hinduism will regard me as an intruder. (Cries of no, no, you are a Hindu, Cheers.)

As for myself I cherish a religion which has indeed the reverence and admiration of my countrymen. However I may fall short of the high ideals of Hinduism, I call myself a Hindu and I will call myself a Hindu to the last breath of my life.

I cherish the deepest reverence for the religious convictions of my countrymen. For that reverence I have suffered and if it should be the will of God, I am prepared to suffer again. For this reverence I have not forgotten that wonderful social system which, in the dim twilight of the past, in the midst of social disorder and barbaric, cruel, monstrous times, has been able to preserve in our midst an element of social order and tranquillity—a genuine Hindu feeling at the bottom of that social system.

In those remote times the memory of which has faded away from human recollection the religious convictions of my ancestors gave consolation to millions of men and in the days yet to come it will afford unbounded consolation to millions of human beings. Is it possible not to feel the deepest reverence, the most overpowering gratitude for the eloquent exponent of this noble and majestic religion of India to the people of the far West ? I am sure, those who are assembled here on the platform of this hall, must accept the teachings of Swami Vivekananda. We may differ from him in some respects, but that matters very little. Who does not pour forth his gratitude to this illustrious man,—to his noble self-abnegation, his enthusiasm, the association in his character of the splendid genius, that adorns the Swami ? We gather here to express our unanimous sense of gratitude to this illustrious individual. We are met together to perform a national act and therefore I desire to express on my behalf my fervent sympathy with the noble object of the meeting,which has found utterance in the gathering of to-day. His life and glowing self-sacrifice should inspire the young

n of our country. His lofty standard of morality, which the secret of all success, should be cultivated by our countrymen, so that we may be prepared for that political redemption which we are all anxiously looking forward.

The Resolution was further supported by Pundit Bhudeb Kabiratna who addressed the meeting in Bengali.

[The substance of his speech is given below in English. For the original speech *vide* Appendix.]

Pundit Bhudeb Kabiratna said :--

Gentlemen --When the *Chátak* (skylark) is thirsty, it looks up for water at the clouds and clouds alone; it scorns the ground and its muddy water shut up in its various reservoirs--rivers and lakes, seas and oceans. Nothing of the world is capable of satiating its thirst. Pretty much the same is the condition of India at the present day; thirsty like the *Chátak* it cries out --'Let me have one drop of water to moisten my parched lips'. But alas! nothing but the cool stream that flows from the fountain of spirituality, nothing but the living waters of Ever-lasting Life, will satiate the thirst of India. Many indeed are under the impression that India's regeneration is a question of political or economical reform, or depends on the development of its industrial or commercial resources. I may be permitted to say, gentlemen, that such a view argues a want of insight into the real nature of India's complaints. Nothing of the world is competent to heal her. It is only those, who like Swami Vivekananda soar high in the region of the clouds upon the bosom of the infinite heavens, those whose soul scorning the ground move about on the higher plane of spiritual truths, that can impart new life to our mother country. The Swami is standing on that height where the clouds do roar and India, the *Chátak*, is filled with joy at the welcome sound, for the quenching of her thirst is now within a measurable distance of time. Would she have rejoiced if instead of teaching the

Wisdom of Life, Vivekananda talked of politics, or discussed the commercial policy of the Government of India? If anything is a source of pride to the Hindu it is his religion, his philosophy of the Upanishads. But alas! we know not how to value this rich inheritance of our Aryan forefathers, and must wonder to find it prized by distant nations, who are entirely different from us in religion, manners, customs, institutions and national characteristics. I know no language—our vernacular is so imperfect as it seems to me—capable of expressing my sense of gratitude to such a people possessed of so large a heart, a people who has been liberal enough to place Hinduism above all other religions. Is it not a matter of national regret, and shame and mortification that we have no idea of the rich mine of priceless gems which is at our very door and need to be convinced of its existence by a people who live across deep seas and oceans in another clime, far far away.

The soil of mother India is proverbially fertile, but we know not how to profit by it; the British capitalist comes in, puts it under the plough, sows indigo or tea or coffee, and makes himself a master of untold wealth. As in the material so in the spiritual world. Our religion and philosophy lie neglected by the sons of the soil, strangers cultivate those fields and reap harvests so rich that the world stands astonished. We remain dumb driven cattle as before, behind all other nations in the race for spiritual life, and continue as ever to complain that our paternal government does not step in to help us in the race. To what a pitiable condition have we indeed been reduced? In olden times the holy sages could not go on with their religious exercises, their sacrifices, their holy meditations because the land knew no rest in consequence of the troubles caused by the *Rakshasas*; much the same was the condition of the land during the Mahomedan rule; but now that our father-land is in the enjoyment of

peace under the beneficent sway of our English rulers, it is a matter of profound regret that the dead weight of national lethargy should stand in the way of spiritual culture and of national regeneration. With these remarks I am very happy to support the Resolution.

The Resolution was then put to the vote and carried unanimously.

RESOLUTION—III.

The third Resolution was moved by Babu Saligram Singh. The Resolution ran as follows :—

That this meeting requests the Chairman to forward to Sreemat Vivekananda Swami, Dr. Barrows and Mr. Snell, copies of the foregoing Resolutions together with the following letter addressed to Swami Vivekananda.

To

SREEMAT VIVEKANANDA SWAMI.

DEAR SIR,

As Chairman of a large, representative and influential meeting of the Hindu inhabitants of Calcutta and the Suburbs, held in the Town Hall of Calcutta, on the 5th of September, 1894, I have the pleasure to convey to you the thanks of the local Hindu Community for your able representation of their religion at the Parliament of Religions that met at Chicago in September 1893.

The trouble and sacrifice you have incurred by your visit to America as a representative of the Hindu Religion are profoundly appreciated by all whom you have done the honour to represent. But their special acknowledgments are due

to you for the services you have rendered to the cause they hold so dear, their sacred *Arya Dharma*, by your speeches and your ready responses to the questions of inquirers. No exposition of the general principles of the Hindu Religion could, within the limits of a lecture, be more accurate and lucid than what you gave in your address to the Parliament of Religions on Tuesday, the 19th September, 1893. And your subsequent utterances on the same subject on other occasions have been equally clear and precise. It has been the misfortune of Hindus to have their religion misunderstood and misrepresented through ages, and therefore they cannot but feel specially grateful to one of them who has had the courage and the ability to speak the truth about it and dispel illusions, among a strange people, in a strange land, professing a different religion. Their thanks are due no less to the audiences and the organisers of meetings, who have received you kindly, given you opportunities for speaking, encouraged you in your work, and heard you in a patient and charitable spirit. Hinduism has, for the first time in its history, found a Missionary, and by a rare good fortune it has found one so able and accomplished as yourself. Your fellow countrymen, fellow citizens and fellow Hindus feel that they would be wanting in an obvious duty if they did not convey to you their hearty sympathy and earnest gratitude for all your labours in spreading a true knowledge of their ancient faith. May God grant you strength and energy to carry on the good work you have begun!

Yours faithfully,
(Sd.) PEARY MOHON MOOKERJEE,
Chairman.

In seconding the Resolution, Babu Amarendra Nath Chatterjee begged leave to express his thanks to the Committee of Arrangement for the part they had assigned

him, as it gave him an opportunity, as a Hindu of honouring the young Hindu reformer Swami Vivekananda, on whom, it appeared, as if the mantle of the *Rishis* had fallen to uphold and maintain and propagate the doctrines of our faith in foreign lands. It was a matter of rejoicing that Hinduism, so much at a discount with his English-educated countrymen, should have engaged the attention, and gained the respect of the philosophers of Europe and America, and it was no inconsiderable gain to the cause of Hinduism that it had found advocates in persons of light and leading, as Professor Max Muller and Mrs. Besant. He, the speaker, hoped and trusted that the effect of the triumph of the Hindu reformer in America would lead to permanent results in rekindling and reviving the enthusiasm of our countrymen, and in remodelling our educational system, in which religious and moral culture formed no part. He, the speaker, also hoped that our ancient religion would be found adapted to the circumstances of the times, and harmonise with the ideas of an ever-advancing civilization, from which large results are to be expected to elevate our position as Hindus.

BABU HEMENDRA NATH MITTER, M. A., B. L., in supporting the Resolution, said :—Brethren—It is with very great diffidence that I rise to address such a vast assembly on an occasion like this. The duty, which I have been called upon to perform, ought to have been entrusted to some one better fitted by a higher spiritual training to discharge it. Were it not for the occasion, I should have thought thrice before venturing to address from the platform of a hall which has resounded with the voices of some of our greatest living orators. But considering, as I do, that the meanest and the best cultured amongst us, whose good fortune it is to pride in a Hindu name, has a right to give vent to his feelings, I did not so much as once bestow a solitary thought on the propriety or otherwise

of my rising to say the few words that I shall presently say. There are occasions, brethren, when it is the feeling that inspires and incites us to speak, and the language, which is only the medium of communication, is not to be taken into consideration, and I have no doubt but that you would show me the indulgence, which I consider I am entitled to receive at your hands.

Speaking in a meeting, specially convened for the purpose of expressing our deep sense of gratitude to, and appreciation of the services of Swami Vivekananda, one cannot help recalling to his mind his august and venerable preceptor and *Guru*, the Lord Ramkrishna Paramhansa Dev. Born in the petty village of Kamarpookur in the District of Hughly, he fixed as his place of *Sádhan*, the root of that tree, ever to be associated with the sacred name of Mahadeva, the *Bel tree* and a grove of trees, well-known as the *Panchavati* in the *Kálibáti* at Dakshineswar. There in the eternal longing of a soul that pants for truth and higher spirituality, enshrined within the majesty of his own self, shutting up, as it were, the five organs of our material senses, after the right Oriental fashion, he made Self, and Self alone, his study, his contemplation. Unlike the modern scientists of the day, who seek in vain to evolve spiritual truths from material ones, he recognized the ancient principle that a perfect spiritual knowledge could be attained only by the spirit, and through the spirit. And so centering his whole inner consciousness in his inner self, he directed the same towards the attainment of *Brahmagnan* till grade after grade, step after step, that was to him an accomplished fact. Then, became manifest that splendid fire, one spark of which has set ablaze a whole continent, and burnt to the very foundation the most advanced and the most civilized portion of the globe. For, were it not for the higher spiritual force, induced in him by his *Guru*, think you that Swami Vivekananda could have achieved what he did? Others

with a so-called better education, with a so-called higher training, visited the continent on missionary tour, but it was reserved for Swami Vivekananda alone to impress the foremost scientists of the day with the majesty and beauty of our ancient *Aryan* teachings. The reason is obvious, and not far to seek. The great Master breathed into his ear the sacred word, and induced in him a spirituality which cultivated and developed as it was in his case, and moulded daily by the muttered shout of his *Diksha'-mantra*, fitted him for the great and arduous task he was destined to perform. For, in his case, the *Mantra* came from a *Mukta-purusha*, from one who knew the key-note of the life he was to mould and impart to it the same that is to keep it harmonious right through. What wonder, then, that Swami Vivekananda should make his voice heard whenever and wherever it is sounded.

To the Swami, perhaps, any word of approbation or thanksgiving that we may offer to give expression to, is of absolutely no value, for has he not attained that height which the voice of praise and censure reaches not alike. But absorbed and engrossed, as we are, with one thousand and one longings and yearnings, we fail to realize that truth, and feel very great pleasure in doing what we have met here this evening to do. It is with the greatest pleasure, therefore, that in response to the call of your Chairman, I support the Resolution which has just been read over to you.

The Resolution was further supported by Babus Manoranjan Guha and Jotindra Lall Mittra in Bengali.

[The substance of their speeches is given below in English. For the original speeches *Vide* Appendix.]

Babu Manoranjan Guha said :—

Gentlemen—We are asked by many "Why is it a matter of congratulation that Hinduism has been successfully represented before the American people by Vivekananda?" Surely it cannot be expected that the *Mlecchas* will turn Hindus,

because Hinduism has been ably expounded before them. To me it seems, however, that the work of the Swami is not only a source of glory to us but will lead to good both spiritual and temporal.

In the first place, his work is a source of national glory. There was in former days, an empress who was deprived of her territories and reduced to the condition of a beggar. She lived in a strange land, was clad in rags, dwelt in a hut depending upon the charity of others. But it was not known to any body that in the midst of her wretchedness she had all the while a priceless jewel concealed in her bosom. When this fact came to the knowledge of the public, she was visited by thousands of people who in spite of her poverty accorded to her the honours due to an empress. Such is the condition of poor India of the present day. In former days she occupied the highest position among nations. Now she is a beggar dependent upon others. But, my dear countrymen, remember that the priceless jewel of Hinduism still lies hidden behind her rags, in this day of her misfortune. The Swami has told the Americans of this hidden jewel, and they have been all taken by surprise. It is now beyond question that the glorious name of India shall be proclaimed throughout the world.

In the second place, allow me to dwell upon the temporal good sure to be brought about by Vivekananda's work. It is well known that our rulers are related by blood to the great American people. They belong to the same race, and speak the same language.

If equally with the Americans they are convinced that we are a noble people, who have made great spiritual progress, who possess a noble literature, a profound philosophy, then it may be hoped that we shall receive a kind and considerate treatment at their hands.

In the third place, it may be asked what is the spiritual

good done by the Swami's work? It seems to me that if the relation between the governor and the governed be one of cordiality it is a state of things singularly favourable for spiritual culture. Good-will and peace must always be the basis of spiritual progress; but it is idle to expect the promotion of such peace and good-will in the absence of those cordial relations.

There is another reason. Hinduism is an extremely catholic religion. All other religions are intended for individuals or classes of individuals; but Hinduism is intended for all mankind. This catholic spirit of Hinduism, if successfully preached before men of other religious denominations, is sure to strike at the root of sectarianism. Will this not help on the cause of religious culture in all other countries as well as in this?

The signs of the times appear to me to be singularly favourable to the Swami. The people of America as well as of Europe are all anxious to be enlightened on the subject of Hinduism. In this connection Prof. Max Muller writing to one of us, says, that Europeans are not particularly attracted by the utterances of Indians on political and other matters; but that he and others like him would be quite prepared to give a respectful hearing to those who had anything to say on the Religion and Philosophy of the Hindus.

Before closing I think it my duty to pronounce the hallowed name of Vivekananda's Great Master Ramkrisna Paramhansa, the root of that majestic plant out of which Vivekananda has come forth as a splendid flower. Paramhansa Dev was the living Impersonation of the Catholic Spirit of Hinduism. Now, if the disciple is great it is because the Master is greater. And need I add that in rendering thanks to the disciple for the good work that he has been doing, we are at the same time offering our humble tribute of honour and reverence, to that Great Master, who has made the existence of

men like Vivekananda possible in this 19th century. I will only conclude by giving my hearty support to the Third Resolution.

Babu Jotindra Lall Mittra said :—

Gentlemen—Let me first of all salute the feet of the Lord God, the Life of all living creatures the Ruler of the universe; and while rendering thanks to Vivekananda and the American people, let me in all humility couple the name of God with that of the Lord Ramkrishna Paramhansa Dev, the Great Spiritual Guide who is unquestionably the root of the present religious revivial, by whom inspired the Swami has been capable of making such a successful appeal to the Americans by his exposition of Hinduism, and whose advent has made it possible for a layman like myself without learning, without social position, without spiritual culture to make a speech before this august assembly. I am deeply convinced that the proceedings of this great meeting cannot possibly be complete unless the hallowed name of the Lord Ramkrishna Paramhansa Dev is uttered with reverence in this hall. As regards the Swami's work and the generous treatment received by him at the hands of the Americans, it seems to me that we have three great lessons to learn. In the first place, we are taught that it is to the American's love of Truth that their appreciation of Hinduism is due, a religion which in its catholicity its wisdom and its purity, is based upon Truth. It is remarkable that the Americans who feel a real thirst for spiritual culture arranged for a Parliament of Religions in connection with the World's Fair.

In the second place we are taught that the time is come when Hinduism will cease to be regarded as a superstitious, idolatrous and worthless religion, but will be looked upon as *Sana'tan*, that is, a universal, living, scientific, infallible religion.

In the third place, we are taught that the principles of Hinduism cannot be communicated through the medium of speeches, or through printed publications. The *Aryan Rishi* showed this by his daily life, a life with the minutest incidents of which—sitting, standing, walking, lying down, or sleeping, eating, bathing &c.—his religion is intimately bound up. The Hindu and his religion are inseparable from each other. His religion is mixed up with his very blood and must be assimilated to his very bones and marrow. Let us give up words and turn our attention once more to real work as prescribed by our *Shástras* which alone shall enable us to attain the end of life. With these remarks I have much pleasure in supporting the Third Resolution.

The Resolution was then put to the vote and carried unanimously.

The Chairman then read before the meeting the following letters from the leading Orthodox members of the Hindu Community, who had expressed their regret for their inability to be present at the meeting.

I.

From Rajah Rajendra Narain Deb Bahadur.

SHOVABAZAR, RAJ-BATI.
5th September, 1894.

To

The Chairman of the meeting.

DEAR SIR,

I regret that my ill-health disables me from attending the meeting. I would therefore request you to convey to the meeting my hearty sympathy with its object. I need hardly say that Swami Vivekananda richly deserves the thanks of the Hindu Community for his very able exposition of the essential principles of Hinduism.

Yours faithfully,
(Sd.) RAJENDRA NARAIN DEB.

II.

From Sir Romesh Chandra Mitter, KT.

BHOWANIPUR,
5th September, 1894.

To

Babu Narendro Nath Sen.

My dear Narendro Babu,

Owing to my health and other causes I am unable to be present at the Town Hall meeting of to-day. That great services have been rendered to the cause of Hinduism by Srimut Vivekananda Swami at the Parliament of Religions at Chicago, and that they are gratefully appreciated by the Hindus, cannot in my opinion be questioned. But I have heard that some persons professing other religions think that the address of the Swami to the Parliament of Religions on the 19th September, 1893, is not a correct exposition of the Hindu Religion. I believe that this opinion proceeds from their ignorance of the principles upon which the Hindu Religion is founded.

Yours sincerely,
(Sd.) ROMESH CHANDRA MITTER.

III.

From Babu Issan Chandra Mookerjee.

To

Pundit Raj Kumar Nyayaratna and others.

Gentlemen,

Since the meeting was proposed and it was arranged that I should be one of those who would convene the meeting. I have come to Ghazipur in the N. W. Provinces, and I regret I am thus precluded from attending the meeting and taking part in its proceedings. I hope, however, that the meeting will be numerously and respectably attended and that its

proceedings will be conducted in a befitting manner, in short that the meeting will be a complete success.

Nothing in this age of progress and enlightenment has been so much misunderstood and misrepresented by foreigners pretending to understand it, as Hinduism; Swami Vivekananda has succeeded in dispersing the mist that gathered round this subject and placing it in a proper light before the American Public. As it is not unlikely that men whose interest it is to disparage and disrate Hinduism may endeavour to make people believe that the Hinduism expounded by Swami Vivekananda at the Parliament of Religions at Chicago is not the Hinduism of the *Shástras*, it behoves us as Hindus to lose no time in offering our congratulations to our distinguished countryman for his successful representation of our Religion and thus practically declaring to the world that in expounding Hinduism in the way he has done, he has only echoed our sentiments and those of our *Shástras*.

The American public who have accepted the exposition of Swami Vivekananda with such a liberal and charitable spirit and who have accorded him such warm reception are also entitled to a share of our gratitude, and in congratulating the Swami we should take occasion to record our thanks to the Americans.

These are the business of to-day's meeting and I hope my colleagues have arranged for their disposal in a proper manner.

GHAZIPUR,
The 3rd Sept. 1894.

Yours faithfully,
(Sd.) ISSAN CHANDRA MOOKERJEE.

IV.

From Babu Sirish Chandra Bose.

GHAZIPUR,
4th September, 1894.

Dear Sirs,

It gives me extreme pleasure to learn that a public meeting is going to be held to consider how best to express gratitude to Swami Vivekananda. Better late than never, for Bengal would have done better to thank its Bengali representative earlier. But Vivekananda is a personage whom now the whole world may claim as its own. I hereby express my entire satisfaction for the steps taken by the promoters of the meeting.

Yours faithfully,
(Sd.) SIRISH CHANDRA BOSE.
Munsiff, Ghazipur.

V.

From Rai Bahadur Gagan Chandra Roy.

GHAZIPUR,
4th September, 1894.

To

Pundit Raj Kumar Nyayaratna and others.

Gentlemen,

I regret my inability to join the meeting for expressing our gratitude to Swami Vivekananda for his able representation of Hinduism at the Parliament of Religions at Chicago, and to thank the American people for the cordial reception they have accorded to him.

Expressing my warm sympathy with the object of the meeting,

I remain,
Gentlemen,
Yours faithfully,
(Sd.) GAGAN CHANDRA ROY.

The speeches evoked constant and enthusiastic applause, and created in the minds of the audience, a feeling of deep reverence for Swami Vivekananda and of profound sympathy for the noble and glorious work done by him, to the cause of Hinduism.

With a vote of thanks to the Chair proposed by Kumar Dinendra Nath Roy and seconded by Babu Nanda Lall Mookerjee, the meeting separated at 7-45 P. M.

APPENDIX.

THE ORIGINAL SPEECHES IN BENGALI.

পণ্ডিত শ্রীযুক্ত ভূদেব কবিরত্ন মহাশয় বলিলেন,—

সভ্যমহোদয়গণ! চাতক পক্ষী যখন তৃষ্ণায় কাতর হয়, তখন সে মেঘের নিকটই জলের প্রার্থী হইয়া দাঁড়ায়। অনন্ত আকাশের বিস্ফারিত বক্ষোদেশে দাঁড়াইয়া সে মেঘের মুখের দিকে এক দৃষ্টে জলের জন্য তাকাইয়া থাকে। তাহার প্রাণের পিপাসা মেঘ ভিন্ন আর কেহ মিটাইতে পারে না। পৃথিবীর নদ, নদী, সরোবরের জল উপেক্ষা করিয়া চাতক, যে জলধারা আকাশ হইতে ক্ষরিত হয়, তাহারই জন্য ভিখারী হইয়া থাকে। পৃথিবীর ক্ষুদ্র গতিতে আবদ্ধ জল—পৃথিবীর ময়লা, মাটী মাখা দুষিত সলিলরাশি চাতকের মর্ম্মগত তৃষ্ণা বিদুরিত করিতে সমর্থ নহে। সেইরূপ বর্ত্তমান অবনতিগ্রস্ত ভারতবর্ষও নানাবিধ অভাব আকাঙ্ক্ষার মধ্যে পড়িয়া তৃষ্ণার্ত্ত চাতকের ন্যায় ব্যাকুল প্রাণে, কাতর-কণ্ঠে বলিতেছেন—আমায় এক বিন্দু জল দাও, আমার পিপাসা-বিশুষ্ক-কণ্ঠে এক বিন্দু শান্তি-সলিল ছিটাইয়া দাও। কিন্তু পৃথিবীর জলে—পার্থিব উন্নতিরূপ সঙ্কীর্ণ জলের ফোয়ারায় ভারতের প্রাণের পিপাসা মিটিবে না; যে জলধারা আকাশ হইতে ক্ষরিত হয়, আধ্যাত্মিক রাজ্যের স্বর্গীয় মন্দাকিনী হইতে যে সুশীতল সলিলরাশি প্রবাহিত হয়, বর্ত্তমান ভারতবর্ষ আজ তাহারই জন্য লালায়িত। কেননা, সে যে তৃষিত চাতক। যাঁহারা বর্ত্তমান কালে কেবল রাজনীতি, অর্থনীতি, বাণিজ্যনীতি, জড়-বিজ্ঞানাদি পার্থিব জলধারায় ভারতের অভাব, ভারতের তৃষ্ণা মিটাইতে চাহেন, তাঁহারা ভারতের মর্ম্মকথা বুঝিতে পারেন না, তাঁহারা ভারতের হৃদয়ের

আর্ত্তনাদ শুনিতে পান না। পৃথিবীর জলে ভারতের প্রাণের পিপাসা মিটিবে না। যাঁহারা মেঘ, যাঁহারা আকাশবিহারী জীব, যাঁহারা আধ্যাত্মিক জ্ঞানরাজ্যের উচ্চস্তরে বাস করেন, তাঁহারাই ভারতের তৃষ্ণা, ভারতের হৃদয়ের অভাব, আকাঙ্ক্ষা মিটাইতে সমর্থ। তাই আজ বিবেকানন্দ স্বামীর মত মহাত্মা সুদূর আমেরিকার প্রান্তরে দাঁড়াইয়া আধ্যাত্মিক জ্ঞানরাজ্যের উচ্চআকাশে অবস্থিত হইয়া যে ধ্বনি করিতেছেন, সেই মেঘগর্জ্জনে সমগ্র ভারতবর্ষ আজ উৎফুল্ল হইয়া উঠিয়াছে, আজ তৃষ্ণার্ত্ত চাতক বহুদিন পরে মেঘ-নিঃসৃত জল পান-আশায় আনন্দের বৈদ্যুতিক তেজে উদ্ভাসিত হইয়া উঠিয়াছে। বাস্তবিক স্বামী বিবেকানন্দ আমেরিকায় যেরূপ হিন্দুধর্ম্মের আন্দোলন-তুফান প্রবাহিত করিয়া বর্ত্তমান ভারতবর্ষকে আনন্দিত করিয়াছেন, এইরূপ আনন্দ-চিহ্ন বহুদিন দেখা যায় নাই। আজ স্বামী বিবেকানন্দ যদি রাজনীতির কথা, বাণিজ্যনীতির কথা কিম্বা অন্য কোনরূপ পার্থিব ঐশ্বর্য্য সম্বন্ধের কথা লইয়া আমেরিকায় যাইতেন, তবে এত আন্দোলন হইত কিনা সন্দেহ। তিনি হিন্দুর আত্মবিদ্যার কথা লইয়া আমেরিকায় চর্চ্চা করিয়াছেন তাই আজ এত আনন্দের দুন্দুভি বাজিতেছে। বাস্তবিকই যদি হিন্দুর কিছু গর্ব্ব করিবার থাকে, তবে এই অধ্যাত্মবিদ্যাকে লইয়া—হিন্দুর সর্ব্বস্বধন ধর্ম্মকে লইয়া। কিন্তু হায়! আমাদের এই নিজস্বধন আমাদের এই পিতৃ পিতামহদের সঞ্চিত ঐশ্বর্য্য আমরা নিজে অনাদর করিতেছি, আমরা গৃহলক্ষ্মীকে পদতলে বিমর্দ্দিত করিতেছি, আর আমেরিকাবাসিগণ, যাঁহাদের ধর্ম্ম, দেশ, হাব, ভাব সম্পূর্ণ আমাদের বিপরীত, তাঁহারা এই অধ্যাত্মবিদ্যাকে মাথায় তুলিয়া লইতেছেন, ধন্য তাঁহাদের উদারতা! কিরূপ ভাষায় ধন্যবাদ দিলে তাঁহাদের প্রতি আমাদের প্রকৃত কৃতজ্ঞতা প্রকাশ করা হয়, তেমন ভাষা আমি খুঁজিয়া পাই না। এতৎ সম্বন্ধে আমাদের ভাষা এত অসম্পূর্ণ যে এই ভাষায় তাঁহাদের উদারতার প্রশংসা করিতে গেলে তাঁহাদের প্রতি অবমাননা করা হয়। বাস্তবিক আমাদের জাতীয় সম্পত্তি আমরা রক্ষা করিবার জন্য চেষ্টিত নই, কিন্তু বিদেশীয় আমেরিকাবাসীগণ সেই সম্পত্তিকে সাদরে অভ্যর্থনা করিতেছেন, ইহা যখন আমি ভাবি, তখন লজ্জায়, ঘৃণায়, দুঃখে আমাতে আর আমি থাকি না, মর্ম্মযন্ত্রণায় অধীর হইয়া নির্জ্জনে নীরবে

কাঁদিয়া ফেলি। আমার মনে হয় আমাদেরই স্বদেশে—আসাম আদি প্রদেশে স্বর্ণের খনি স্বরূপ উর্ব্বরভূমি সমস্ত বিদ্যমান রহিয়াছে, এই উর্ব্বর ভূমিতে কৃষিকার্য্য করিলে কত অর্থ আমরা পাইতে পারিতাম; কিন্তু হায়! আমরা স্বদেশে থাকিয়া আমাদের ঘরের কাছের এই রত্ন ভাণ্ডারের সংবাদ কিছুই জানিলাম না, পরন্তু বিদেশ হইতে সাত সমুদ্র তের নদী পার হইয়া ইংরাজ ব্যবসায়ী আসিয়া সেই আসামের উর্ব্বর ক্ষেত্রে নীল বা কাফি আদির চাষ করিয়া কত অগাধ টাকা লইয়া যাইতেছেন; সেইরূপ এমন একদিন আসিবে যেদিন আমাদেরই শাস্ত্র আলোড়ন করিয়া আমাদের অধ্যাত্মবিদ্যাকে করতলগত করিয়া পাশ্চাত্য দেশবাসী যোগাদিসাধন-শাস্ত্রের অপূর্ব্বরত্নকে অধিকার করিয়া জগৎকে চমকিত করিবেন। আর আমরা ভেড়ার দল চিরদিনই জগতের পশ্চাতে পড়িয়া ধূলিরাশির সহিত মিশ্রিত হইয়া যাইব। আর কেবল বলিব, রাজা আমাদের বিদেশীয়, বিজাতীয়, তিনি আমাদের কিছুই সাহায্য করেন না, তাইত কিছুই উন্নতি করিতে পারিতেছি না। ভাল তুমি হিন্দু, তুমি যদি যোগ সাধনাদিদ্বারা নিজ জীবনের উন্নতি কর ত তাহাতে কি ইংরাজ রাজ তোমাকে জেলে দিবেন? বরং এমন স্বধর্ম্ম রক্ষক রাজার রাজত্বে নিরুপদ্রবে বাস করিয়াও আমরা ধর্ম্ম-সাধনা করিতে পারিতেছি না, ইহা আমাদের নিতান্ত শোচনীয় দোষ। পূর্ব্বে ঋষিরা যাগ যজ্ঞ তপস্যাদির যখন অনুষ্ঠান করিতেন তখন রাক্ষসেরা, দস্যুরা আসিয়া কত উপদ্রব অত্যাচার করিত, মুসলমানের রাজত্বেও কত হিন্দুকে উপদ্রব সহিতে হইত; এখন ইংরাজ রাজের কৃপায় সেরূপ কোন অশান্তি নাই। এমন শান্তিপূর্ণ সময়েও যদি আমরা আধ্যাত্মিক জীবনের উন্নতি না করিতে পারি, তবে এমন পতিত, অলস জাতির দুর্দ্দশা ভোগ করা, ন্যায়-শাস্ত্রের নিয়মানুসারে দোষাবহ নহে।

শ্রীযুক্ত বাবু মনোরঞ্জন গুহ বলিলেন,—

অনেকে জিজ্ঞাসা করেন, বিবেকানন্দ আমেরিকায় যাইয়া হিন্দু ধর্ম্ম প্রচার করিয়াছেন তাহাতে এত আনন্দ প্রকাশের কারণ কি? ম্লেচ্ছগণ কখনই হিন্দু ধর্ম্মের ব্যাখ্যা শুনিয়া হিন্দু হইবে না। বিবেকানন্দের কার্য্যে তাঁহার

মান ও যশ যথেষ্ট হইয়াছে, কিন্তু তাহাতে আমাদের গৌরব, স্বার্থ বা পরমার্থ কি আছে? আমার সামান্য বুদ্ধিতে আমি দেখিতে পাই ইহাতে সত্যই আমাদের কিছু গৌরব, কিছু স্বার্থ এবং কিঞ্চিৎ পরমার্থ আছে। আমি সংক্ষেপে আমার কথা বলিব, কেননা ইংরাজী বক্তৃতার পরে বাঙ্গালা শুনিতে হয়ত অনেকের রুচি হইবে না। (না, না।)

১ম। আমাদের ইহাতে গৌরব কি? কোন সময়ে এক রাজরাজেশ্বরী দৈবঘটনায় রাজ্যৈশ্বর্য্য সমস্ত হারাইয়া বিদেশে অপরিচিত স্থানে কাঙ্গালিনী বেশে বাস করিতেছিলেন। তাঁহার পরিধানে ছিন্ন জীর্ণ মলিন বস্ত্র, উপজীবিকা তাঁহার ভিক্ষান্ন, আশ্রয় তাঁহার পর্ণকুটীর। লোকেরা তাঁহাকে চির-ভিখারিণী বই আর কিছুই জানিত না, কেহই তাঁহাকে ভিখারিণীর অধিক আদর যত্ন ও সম্ভ্রম করিত না। কিন্তু এই ঘোরতর দুঃখের অবস্থায়ও গত-গৌরবের চিহ্ন স্বরূপ এক খণ্ড অমূল্য মাণিক, কাঙ্গালিনী জীর্ণ বসনে ঢাকিয়া আপনার বক্ষঃস্থলে লুকাইয়া রাখিয়া ছিলেন। এতদিন কেহই তাহা জানিত না, এক দিন হটাৎ মলিন বস্ত্রের অন্তরালে সেই অমূল্য রত্ন একজন দেখিতে পাইল, এবং বিস্ময়ান্বিত হইয়া অন্যান্যকে দেখাইল। তখন দলে দলে লোক আসিয়া দেখিতে লাগিল, সকলেই দেখিয়া অবাক্ হইল এবং বুঝিল যে এই কাঙ্গালিনী চিরভিখারিণী নহে। একদিন ইঁহার অতুল সম্পদ ছিল, একদিন এই কাঙ্গালিনী রাজরাণী ছিলেন। তখন সকলেই কাঙ্গালিনীকে ভিন্ন নয়নে দেখিতে লাগিল, সকলের নিকটই তাঁহার সম্মান ও গৌরব হইল। সেই দিন হইতে কেহ আর তাঁহাকে ভিখারিণী বলিয়া অবহেলা করে না, কাঙ্গালিনী, ভিখারিণী থাকিয়াও সম্ভ্রমে রাজরাণী হইলেন।

আজ ভারতের অবস্থাও এই কাঙ্গালিনীর ন্যায়। ভারতও একদিন রাজ-রাজেশ্বরী ছিলেন কিন্তু দৈবদুর্ব্বিপাকে আজ তাঁহার কিছুই নাই। সর্ব্বপ্রকারে ভিখারিণী, পর-মুখাপেক্ষিনী; জগৎ ইঁহাকে ভিখারিণী বই জানে না, পৃথিবীতে ইঁহার গৌরব নাই। কিন্তু এই মহাদুঃখের দিনেও ভারত-মাতা আপনার জীর্ণ বসনের অন্তরালে অমূল্য ধর্ম্মমাণিকটী বুকে করিয়া রক্ষা করিয়া আসিতেছেন।

স্বামী বিবেকানন্দ আমেরিকায় যাইয়া সকলের নিকট দুঃখিনীর সেই ... পুত্রের সংবাদ দিয়াছেন। তাহাতে লোক সকল চমকিত হইয়াছে। লোকেরা জানিয়াছে দুঃখিনী ভারত চিরকাঙ্গালিনী নহেন। এমন অমূল্য মাণিক যাঁহার বুকে আছে, তাঁহার অঙ্গেও অবশ্য বহুমূল্য পরিচ্ছদ ছিল এবং একদিন সে হয়ত রাজরাজেশ্বরী ছিল। আজই হউক বা দুদিন পরে হউক ক্রমে ভারতের গৌরব দেশদেশান্তরে ঘোষিত হইবেই হইবে। সুতরাং বিবেকানন্দের কার্য্য দ্বারা আমাদের গৌরব আছে।

২য়। স্বার্থ কি ? আমরা বিজীত জাতি। আমাদিগের যাঁহারা জেতা; আমেরিকাবাসীদিগের সহিত তাঁহাদের, জাতি, রক্ত ও ভাষাগত একতা আছে। আমেরিকার কার্য্য-কল ইংলণ্ডে অপ্রকাশিত থাকে না। জেতা জাতি যদি বিজীত জাতিকে অত্যন্ত হীন মনে করে, তবে তাহাদের প্রতি অত্যাচার করিতে সঙ্কুচিত হয় না। কিন্তু যদি জানিতে পায় ইঁহারাও সম্ভ্রান্তবংশ, ইহাঁদেরও উচ্চধর্ম্মচিন্তা আছে, ইহাদেরও উৎকৃষ্ট সাহিত্য আছে, জ্ঞানগর্ভ দর্শনশাস্ত্র আছে, জগতে ইহাদের পূর্ব্বপুরুষগণ মহা গৌরবান্বিত ছিলেন, তবে তাঁহাদের প্রতি অত্যাচার করিতে সহজে প্রবৃত্তি হয় না এবং তাঁহাদিগকে সম্মান বা সমাদর করিতেও ইচ্ছা হয়।

হিন্দু শাস্ত্রের কথা যতই পশ্চিমদেশে প্রচারিত হইবে ততই ভারতের গৌরব পৃথিবীতে বর্দ্ধিত হইবে ; এবং আমাদের জেতা জাতির নিকটও আমরা দিন দিন সদ্ব্যবহার প্রাপ্ত হইব।

ইতিপূর্ব্বে যাঁহারা ইউরোপে কি আমেরিকায় গিয়াছেন তাঁহাদের দ্বারা এ দেশের ধর্ম্মশাস্ত্রের বিশেষ প্রচার হয় নাই। আমি যতদূর জানি তাহাতে স্বামী বিবেকানন্দকেই এ বিষয়ে আমি প্রথম ব্যক্তি বলিয়া জানি। সুতরাং তাঁহার দ্বারা আমাদের এক বিশেষ রাজনৈতিক স্বার্থসিদ্ধির দ্বারও প্রথম উন্মুক্ত হইল।

৩য়। পরমার্থ কি ? রাজা প্রজায় সদ্ভাব না থাকিলে রাজ্যে ধর্ম্ম সাধনের বড়ই বিঘ্ন হয়। কোন পর্ব্বত গহ্বরে যাইয়া কেহ সাধন করিতে পারেন, কিন্তু আমি সামাজিক ধর্ম্মের কথা বলিতেছি। রাজায় প্রজায় সদ্ভাব না থাকিলে বহুবিধ উপদ্রব ও চিত্ত-চাঞ্চল্যের কারণ হয়। শান্তি-পূর্ণ রাজ্যই

ধর্ম্ম সাধনের অনুকূল। রাজা প্রজার সদ্ভাব না থাকিলে রাজ্যে কখনই শান্তি হয় না। পরস্পরের মধ্যে সম্মান না থাকিলেও সদ্ভাবের আশা করা যায় না। বিবেকানন্দ যে প্রণালীতে কার্য্য করিতেছেন তাহাতে আজ হউক কি বিলম্বে হউক রাজ-জাতি আমাদের সম্ভ্রম বুঝিতে পারিবেন এবং আশা করি পরস্পরের মধ্যে সদ্ভাবও জন্মাইবে, সুতরাং এই ভারতভূমি ধর্ম্ম সাধনেরও অধিকতর অনুকূল হইবে।

আর এক কথা। হিন্দুধর্ম্ম বড়ই উদার ধর্ম্ম। অন্যান্য ধর্ম্মের ন্যায় হিন্দু-ধর্ম্ম বলে না যে অন্য ধর্ম্মে থাকিলে পরিত্রাণ হইবে না। অন্যান্য ধর্ম্ম অধিকারী বিশেষের জন্য কিন্তু হিন্দুধর্ম্ম মনুষ্য জাতির জন্য; কাজেই হিন্দুধর্ম্মে উদারতা আছে।

লোকে কাম, ক্রোধ, লোভ, মোহ, মদ, মাৎসর্য্য প্রভৃতিকেই পাপ বলিয়া জানে, কিন্তু ধর্ম্ম সাধনের পথে যত প্রকার বিঘ্ন আছে সাম্প্রদায়িক বিদ্বেষই সর্ব্বাপেক্ষা মহাবিঘ্ন, মহাপাপ। যদিও হিন্দুদিগের মধ্যে বর্ত্তমানে সর্ব্বত্র সে উদারভাব পাওয়া যায় না, কিন্তু হিন্দু-শাস্ত্রে ধর্ম্মের ভাব অত্যন্ত উদার। এই উদার ভাবটী পৃথিবীতে প্রচারিত হইলে, জগতের সাম্প্রদায়িক বিদ্বেষ কমিতে পারে। তাহা হইলে সকল সম্প্রদায়ের লোকেরই ধর্ম্ম সাধনের সুবিধা হইতে পারিবে। স্বামী বিবেকানন্দের প্রচার দ্বারা এই শুভকার্য্যের সাহায্য হইবে, সুতরাং ইহাতে আমাদের পরমার্থও আছে।

বিবেকানন্দ অতি উপযুক্ত সময়ে আমেরিকায় গমন করিয়াছেন। এই সময়ে আমেরিকা এবং ইউরোপের লোকেরা এ দেশের কথা শুনিতে চাহিতে-ছেন। আমি শুনিয়াছি, এদেশের কোন প্রসিদ্ধ ব্যক্তিকে অধ্যাপক ম্যাকস্-মুলর সম্প্রতি এই ভাবে এক পত্র লিখিয়াছেন যে, "তোমরা এ দেশে আসিয়া আমাদেরই কথা বলিয়া থাক ইহাতে আমাদের বিশেষ আকর্ষণ হয় না। তোমরা যদি তোমাদের দেশের কথা শুনাইতে পার তবে আমরা শুনিতে প্রস্তুত আছি। এ দেশে ধর্ম্ম প্রচার করিতে হইলে, তোমাকে পাচ বৎসর একান্তে থাকিয়া সংস্কৃত পাঠ ও হিন্দুধর্ম্ম চর্চ্চা করিতে হইবে, পরে আসিয়া কথা বলিলে আমরা আগ্রহের সহিত শুনিব।" বিবেকানন্দ এই উপযুক্ত সময়ে ঈশ্বর কর্ত্তৃকই প্রেরিত হইয়াছেন। কেন না, এখান হইতে উদ্যোগ

করিয়া আপনারা তাঁহাকে পাঠান নাই। বিবেকানন্দকে ধন্যবাদ দেওয়ার পূর্ব্বে আমাদিগের একটী বিশেষ কর্ত্তব্য কার্য্য আছে। বিবেকানন্দের মূলে যাঁহার শক্তি কার্য্য করিতেছে, বিবেকানন্দরূপ ফুল, যাঁহা হইতে রস পাইয়া ফুটিয়াছেন, সেই মহাত্মা রামকৃষ্ণ পরমহংস মহাশয়ের নামে সকলে একবার জয়ধ্বনি করি।

সকলের আত্মাতেই ধর্ম্মের বীজ নিহিত রহিয়াছে। এই আত্মা-নিহিত ধর্ম্মবীজের পরস্পরের মধ্যে কোন পার্থক্য লক্ষিত হয় না। বীজ এক আকৃতি বিশিষ্ট, কিন্তু এই বীজ হইতে যখন বৃক্ষের বিকাশ হয় তখন ভিন্ন ভিন্ন অংশের নানারূপ আকৃতি প্রকৃতি হয়। শাখা, প্রশাখা, কাণ্ড, গুঁড়ি, পত্র, পুষ্প সবই দেখিতে ভিন্ন ভিন্ন। কিন্তু বীজের পূর্ণবিকাশ বা চরম পরিণতির নাম ফল। ফলে পৌঁছিলে তাহার পর আর আকৃতি কি গুণগত কোন পার্থক্য হয় না। সাধকদের জীবন, বিকাশের প্রথম অবস্থা, সুতরাং তাহাতে অনেক অমিল থাকিবে। সিদ্ধ-পুরুষেরা ধর্ম্মবৃক্ষের ফলস্বরূপ, সেখানে কোন অমিলন বা বিরোধ নাই। মহাত্মা রামকৃষ্ণ পরমহংস ধর্ম্মবৃক্ষের একটী সুপক্ক ফল।

হিন্দুধর্ম্মের অসাম্প্রদায়িক উদারতত্ত্বের তিনি পরিস্ফুট সাকার মূর্ত্তি, (উচ্চ করতালী)। স্বামী বিবেকানন্দ যখন তাঁহারই শিষ্য তখন ভরসা করি, তাঁহার জীবনেও এই ভাব প্রস্ফুটিত হইবে। শিষ্যের সমস্ত শক্তিই গুরুর শক্তি। সুতরাং বিবেকানন্দের দ্বারা আমরা বহু প্রত্যাশা করি।

হিন্দুধর্ম্ম বহু শাখাবিশিষ্ট। বিবেকানন্দ যে সকলেরই মনোমত কথা বলিবেন, এরূপ প্রত্যাশা করা যায় না। কিন্তু তিনি হিন্দু-শাস্ত্রের যে চিন্তা-প্রণালী বিদেশে উপস্থিত করিতেছেন, তাহাতেই আমাদের প্রচুর উপকার হইবে।

"আমরা দলাদলিকে নিন্দা করি কিন্তু কাজের বেলায় সকলেই দলাদলি করি। এক সাহেব তাঁহার কেরাণী বাবুকে জিজ্ঞাসা করিলেন, 'বাবু তোমরা কাপড় চোপড়, কলম টলম, এরূপ অনর্থক জোড়া জোড়া কথা বল কেন?' বাবু বলিলেন "সাহেব, আমরা ভদ্রলোকেরা ওরূপ বলি না, ওরূপ বলে মুটে টুটেরা।"

আমাদের অবস্থাও এইরূপ। তাই বর্ত্তমান বিষয় লইয়াও মতান্তর ; যাহা হউক একদিনে কিছু জাতীয় চরিত্র পরিবর্ত্তন হইবে না। কিন্তু একথা সাহস করিয়া বলা যায়, স্বামী বিবেকানন্দ যে কার্য্যের সূত্রপাত করিয়াছেন, তজ্জন্য কেবল হিন্দু কেন, সমস্ত ভারতবাসীরই তাঁহাকে ধন্যবাদ দেওয়া কর্ত্তব্য। বিবেকানন্দকে সমাদর করাতে চিকাগো ধর্ম্মসভার সভাপতি এবং আমেরিকাবাসীগণও আমাদের ধন্যবাদের পাত্র। আমাদের এই কৃতজ্ঞতা তাঁহাদিগকে জ্ঞাপন করা কর্ত্তব্য। (মহোচ্চ করতালি)

শ্রীযুক্ত বাবু যতীন্দ্রলাল মিত্র বি, এ, বি, এল, সর্ব্বাগ্রে সর্ব্বজীবের প্রাণস্বরূপ এই জগতের নিয়ন্তা শ্রীভগবানের চরণে কোটী কোটী প্রণাম করিয়া পরে সমবেত ভদ্রমণ্ডলীর চরণে প্রণামপূর্ব্বক বলিলেন—সমাগত ভদ্র মহোদয়গণ ! আজ আমরা পূজনীয় স্বামী বিবেকানন্দ ও আমেরিকাবাসীদিগকে অন্তরের সহিত ধন্যবাদ দিবার জন্য এই সভায় মিলিত হইয়াছি, কিন্তু স্বামী বিবেকানন্দ চিকাগো ধর্ম্মমেলায় হিন্দুধর্ম্মের বিষয় বক্তৃতা দিয়া আমাদিগের যেরূপ গৌরববর্দ্ধন করিয়াছেন এবং আমেরিকাবাসীগণ স্বামীজীর ঐ বক্তৃতা শ্রবণ করিয়া যেরূপ সহৃদয়তা প্রকাশ করিয়া স্বামীজীকে সাদরে গ্রহণ করিয়াছেন তজ্জন্য তাঁহাদিগকে কৃতজ্ঞতা সহকারে ধন্যবাদ দিবার পূর্ব্বে এক মহাত্মার নাম উল্লেখ না করিয়া থাকিতে পারিলাম না। যাঁহার কৃপায় আজ আমরা স্বামী বিবেকানন্দকে পাইয়াছি, যাঁহার মহীয়সী শক্তি সঞ্চারে আজ শ্রীমৎ বিবেকানন্দ হিন্দু-ধর্ম্মের মর্ম্ম ব্যাখ্যা করিতে সামর্থ্যবান হইয়াছেন, যাঁহার অপার করুণাবলে আজ আমার ন্যায় দীনহীন মূর্খ ব্যক্তি ও, ধর্ম্মের আলোচনা করিতেছে, যিনি মহদুদ্দেশ্য সাধনের জন্য অলক্ষিতে থাকিয়া শত বিঘ্ন বাধা অতিক্রম করিয়া স্বামী বিবেকানন্দকে আমেরিকায় পাঠাইয়া দিয়াছেন, সেই আমাদিগের গুরু শ্রী শ্রী৺রামকৃষ্ণ পরমহংসদেবের মহিমা ঘোষণা না করিয়া থাকিতে পারিলাম না। ইতিপূর্ব্বে বক্তাগণ স্বামী বিবেকানন্দকে ও আমেরিকাবাসীদিগকে ধন্যবাদ প্রদান করিয়াছেন, আমিও তাঁহা-

দিগের অনুসরণ করিয়া স্বামী বিবেকানন্দকে ও আমেরিকাবাসীদিগকে প্রাণ ভরিয়া ধন্যবাদ দিতেছি। কিন্তু এ স্থলে শ্রীশ্রী৺রামকৃষ্ণ পরমহংসদেবের নাম উল্লেখ না করিলে যেন সভার কার্য্য সম্পূর্ণ হইল না। যেন পরমহংসদেবের গুণানুকীর্ত্তন না করিলে অদ্যকার সভাতে জীবনসঞ্চার করা হইল না, তাই বলি,—আসুন ভদ্রমণ্ডলীগণ! কিছু বলিবার পূর্ব্বে একবার প্রাণ ভরিয়া ভক্তি-সহকারে তাঁহাকে ধন্যবাদ প্রদান করি। সময়ের অল্পতাবশতঃ অনেক কথা বলিবার থাকিলেও অদ্যকার আলোচ্য বিষয় সম্বন্ধে দুই চারিটী কথা বলিয়া অবসর গ্রহণ করিব। স্বামী বিবেকানন্দের ধর্ম্ম ব্যাখ্যা ও আমেরিকাবাসী-দিগের ব্যবহার হইতে আমরা তিনটী বিষয় স্পষ্টরূপে শিক্ষা করিতেছি। প্রথমতঃ আমেরিকাবাসীদিগের সত্যপ্রিয়তা। যদি আমেরিকাবাসীগণ সত্যের আদর না জানিতেন, যদি তাঁহারা নিরপেক্ষভাবে সত্যের সেবা করিয়া না থাকিতেন তাহা হইলে তাঁহারা কখনই কেবল মাত্র সত্যের উপর প্রতিষ্ঠিত এই বিশাল হিন্দুধর্ম্মের মর্ম্ম কখনই হৃদয়ঙ্গম করিতে পারিতেন না। আমেরিকাবাসীগণ সত্যপ্রিয়, সেই জন্য অন্য ক্ষণভঙ্গুর ও অসার পদার্থ লইয়া তাঁহারা প্রদর্শনী-শালা স্থাপিত করেন নাই, তাঁহারা সত্যের অনুসন্ধান ও সত্য-লাভ করিবার জন্য এই সুবৃহৎ ধর্ম্মমেলার আয়োজন করিয়াছেন; তাই বলি আমেরিকাবাসীগণ হিন্দুদিগের ধর্ম্মতত্ত্ব যে হৃদয়ঙ্গম করিবেন ইহা অধিক আশ্চর্য্যের বিষয় নহে। দ্বিতীয় কথা, আজ বহুদিন হইতে হিন্দু পরাধীন বহুদিন হইতেই হিন্দুর ধর্ম্মকর্ম্ম বিদেশীয় ও বিজাতীয়দিগের চক্ষে অতি অপদার্থ, অসার, ভ্রমপূর্ণ ও অবৈজ্ঞানিক বলিয়া নিন্দিত ও অনাদৃত হইয়া আসিতেছিল, কিন্তু এখন বোধ হয় হিন্দুর ধর্ম্ম-জগতের সেই গাঢ় কুজ্ঝটিকা ক্রমে ক্রমে বিদূরিত হইবার উপযুক্ত সময় আসিয়াছে। এখন কেবল আমেরিকা নয় সমগ্র ইউরোপ জানিতে পারিবেন যে হিন্দুদিগের ধর্ম্ম কুসংস্কারপূর্ণ, অসার, পৌত্তলিক ধর্ম্ম নহে, কিন্তু এই ধর্ম্ম অনন্ত, অসীম, ভ্রম, প্রমাদ বিপ্রলিপ্সা শূন্য, সজীব ও পূর্ণরূপে বিজ্ঞানের উপর সংস্থাপিত। হিন্দুর ধর্ম্মে উপরোক্ত কয়েকটী গুণের সমাবেশ আছে বলিয়া হিন্দুর ধর্ম্মকে সনাতন ধর্ম্ম বলে। তৃতীয় বিষয়, হিন্দুর ধর্ম্ম বক্তৃতা দ্বারা শিখিবার ধর্ম্ম নহে। আর্য্য ঋষিগণ কখনই বক্তৃতার ছলে হিন্দুধর্ম্ম-তত্ত্ব প্রকাশ করিয়া যান নাই, বরঞ্চ

তাঁহারা স   নহে;
ইহা কর্ম্মে   ক্তৃতা
দিলে হইবে   কেবল
কার্য্যে অন   শয়ন
কাল পর্য্যন্ত   হিন্দু-
দিগের ধর্ম্ম   পর্য্যন্ত
কিরূপে চ   ইবে ও
আচরণ করি   হিন্দুত্ব
কোন ও পৃ   এক
চুল তফাৎ   রিলে,
তুমি অহিন   খুলিয়া
রাখিবার বে   ইহা
হিন্দুর শোণি   ভাবে
বহমান।   যন্ত্রণা,
লাঞ্ছনা ও   হইয়া
পড়িতে পা   পর্য্যন্ত
একজন মাত্র   কবারে
লুপ্ত হইবার কোনও আশঙ্কা নাই। তাই বলিতেছি ভদ্র-মণ্ডলী, আমরা যতই সভা করি না কেন, যতই বক্তৃতার ছটা দেখাই না কেন, যতই বড় বড় কথা বলিয়া গণ্ডগোল করি না কেন, কার্য্যে অনুষ্ঠান না করিলে কিছুতেই ধর্ম্মলাভ করিবার সম্ভাবনা নাই। কথায় কথায় অনেক দিন চলিয়া গেল, আসুন একবার দৃঢ়ব্রত হইয়া কার্য্য ক্ষেত্রে অবতরণ করি। কার্য্য ভিন্ন আর কিছুতেই এই নির্জীব হিন্দুদিগের জীবন লাভের আশা নাই, অতএব আসুন বাক্য ছাড়িয়া শাস্ত্র-নির্দ্দিষ্ট ক্রিয়া কলাপের অনুষ্ঠান করি, কার্য্য দ্বারা হিন্দু বলিয়া পরিচয় দিই, এবং চির-দুঃখিনী ভারত-মাতার অশ্রুজল মুছাইয়া, মা বলিয়া সন্তানের কর্ত্তব্য পালন করি। নমো ভগবতে বাসুদেবায়।